

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Franklin Hall

AND/OR COMMON

Masonic Building**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Bohemia Avenue, north east corner of 1st Street

CITY, TOWN

Chesapeake City

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Cecil**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT
☒ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC
☒ PRIVATE
☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☐ OCCUPIED
☒ UNOCCUPIED
☒ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES RESTRICTED
☐ YES UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM
☐ COMMERCIAL ☐ PARK
☒ EDUCATIONAL ☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS
☐ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ MILITARY ☐ OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Chesapeake City District Civic Association Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

c/o William Stubbs

CITY, TOWN

Chesapeake City

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21915**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE. Cecil County Courthouse
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Liber #: WAS No. 331
Folio #: 30

STREET & NUMBER

Courthouse Building

CITY, TOWN

Elkton

STATE

Maryland 21921**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Cecil County Survey

DATE

1967-68

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Maryland Historical Trust

CITY, TOWN

Annapolis

STATE

Maryland 21401

7 DESCRIPTION

CE-120

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☒ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The most substantial brick building in Chesapeake City is Franklin Hall, located on the north east corner of Bohemia Avenue and First Street. It faces Bohemia Avenue and its facade is three bays long. However, on the first story are two protruding shop windows flanking a center double door and a smaller auxiliary door on the north side of the facade. Both doors have granite sills and transom above the door. Originally the shop windows had paneled shutters for closing the building when not in use. A flat awning which formerly bore the name of the establishment is supported on cast iron scrolled brackets.

Above the awning the facade is divided into three panels by pilasters. Each panel has a semicircular arched window on both stories. Flanking the third floor windows are recesses the size of a brick. Above the latter windows is a row of corbels, closing the panels vertically. The brick of the facade is smooth and laid with a very narrow joint. First story brick is new and not as refined.

In the gable, with its widely overhanging eaves is a circular window with four pane sash.

The two sides are also divided into three panels by pilaster strips. The brick is Common bond and the brick not as smooth as the facade. On the south side there is one window on the third floor and a blocked window on the second. The central panel has a window on each story and the third panel has a door (newly introduced) on the first story and two windows above. There are three cellar windows and two doors. On the north side windows are only on the third story

On the east side of the structure is a Mansard roof wing, also built of brick upon a stone foundation-basement. At ground level (basement) are two doors on the south and a window on the north. Each of the three facades is divided into two panels each having a window. The second story has a new wood shingle roof with two dormers on the north and south and one on the east. Part of this structure was rebuilt in 1975 during the remodeling.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Architecturally, Franklin Hall is one of the most significant structures in town, due not only to its brick construction, but also the Romanesque style, unique to the town.

The earliest references to Chesapeake City, mention the Tavern as the only attraction. Mrs. Mary Chick was the Tavern keeper before 1800. Chick's Tavern was on the land where Franklin Hall now stands, the exact location is uncertain, but it was surrounded by all the outbuildings necessary for the care of travelers and their horese. The Tavern probably existed during the Revolutionary War for several members of the family took the oath of allegiance in 1781. In 1799, Mrs. Chick willed the property to her son, Perigrene, who carried on the business.

When construction on the Canal began in 1820's, most of the actual work took place to the east of town near the deep cut. The tide lock and gates were relatively easy to construct and did not require the large crew of workmen involved in moving the earth at the "deep cut". Many of the workmen's homes were in the St. Georges area. Some few located here in quickly built, whitewashed houses along the banks of the Canal. All the workmen enjoyed the Tavern, however, no matter where they lived or worked. "Altercations", as the local paper referred to disturbances, were not uncommon when the Irish laborers and Black laborers started drinking together.² Chick's Tavern and later the Bayard House, were popular gathering places. Sailors coming from ports to the north and from the south brought news of the world and news of more local events. This was the fastest method of communication although not the most accurate.

The Chick's were involved in several enterprises other than the Tavern. Jonathan Chick, a son of Mary Chick, was a joiner and his services were much in demand. The family also operated a grist mill in the Bethel area, grinding grain into flour and feed for local farmers. While waiting for the grain to be ground, some of the farmers probably passed the time in the local Tavern, catching up on the news as well as refreshing themselves. The news in the last years of the eighteenth century would be especially interesting to the Cecil County residents, news about the building of the proposed Canal, the Back Creek area being one of several sites under consideration.

The Tavern House had several owners in the early nineteenth cen-

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Michael Bourne & Katherine Wein

April, 1976

ORGANIZATION

DATE

South Chesapeake City Historic District Commission

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

c/o Town Council of Chesapeake City

(301) 885-5298

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Chesapeake City

Maryland 21915

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

#8 Continued

tury. In 1836, Richard H. Bayard, who had acquired the property through his wife's inheritance, sold to Kendall Cropper the land "On the east side of Bohemia Avenue at low water mark in Back Creek, south along the east side of said avenue about 400 feet to a stone in the corner of the north side of Second Street, 264 feet, then north-westwardly in a straight line to the eastern corner of the wharf, lately constructed by the said Kendall Cropper, being a point 70 feet east of Bohemia Avenue, thence to low water mark in Back Creek with a line parallel to Bohemia Avenue. Bounded northward by Back Creek, east by Sipple's Gut, south by Second Street, west by Bohemia Avenue."

Kendall Cropper, an early speculator and business man in Chesapeake City, realized the commercial possibilities of the property, located at a busy crossroads, at a crossing of Back Creek, and on an anchorage that could accommodate the river and bay boats. We know that Kendall Cropper operated a busy wharf here and he probably conducted some related business, also, possibly the same Tavern House. When Cropper conveyed the property to John A. Craig, in 1868, it is referred to as the "Tavern Property".

Two years later, Thomas Conrey, a builder, came into possession. He is believed to have built the handsome brick building known as Franklin Hall, which has been a commercial and civic center since the 1970's. There was always a store on the street level. For many years the firm of Bowen and Boulden, conducted a hardware and harness business here. On the lower level, in back, a stable accommodated horses needed for delivery wagons, etc.. A stairway in the center of the building led to the second floor where more merchandise was stored. In the front part of the basement, a large room provided a practice area for the town band.

The room on the third floor of Franklin Hall was always available for lodge meetings or any other group meeting.

At one time, dances were held in this building, with music supplied by local groups.

In 1906, Ralph Rees leased the store from the Conrey estate for \$200.00 a year. He found the rent to be more than his business could afford so he moved his business to a new building a few years later, at the corner of Second Street and Bohemia Avenue. In the late 1920's and 30's, Harry Lovitt operated a store here. All business dropped off in Chesapeake City during the 1920's and 1930's. The change from locks to a sea-level waterway changed the nature of traffic through the Canal. Stops were no longer necessary for bills of lading or tugboats. Much of the trade was lost as a result.

In 1948, Cecil Lodge #125 AF and AM, bought the property from the Conrey estate. The Masonic Hall, a large building on the Causeway that housed the U.S. Post Office and several shops, had to be demolished when the Army Engineers widened the Canal in 1929. The Lodge eventually bought the Hall as a meeting place.

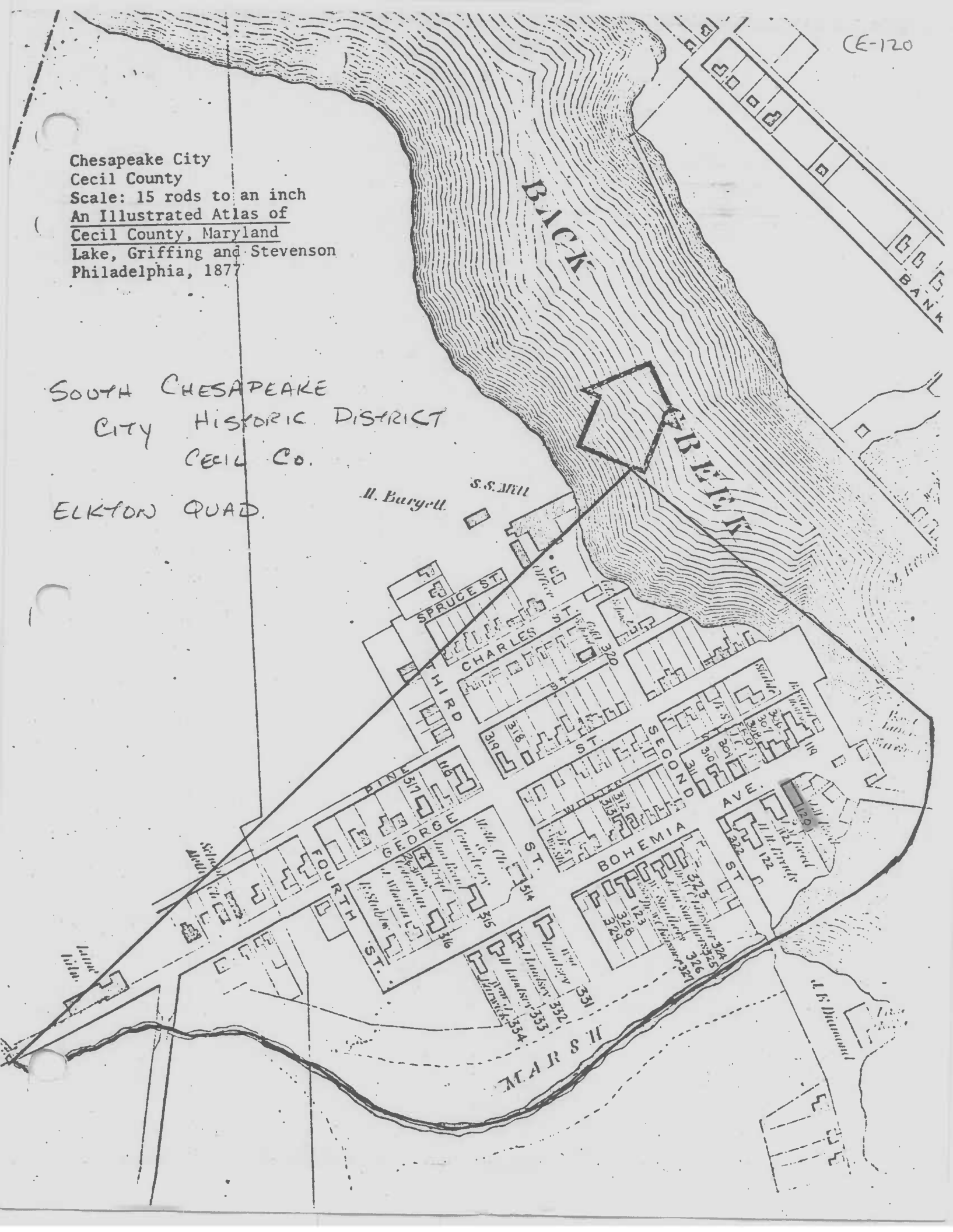
1974 saw the beginning of restoration of Franklin Hall. The building was bought by the Chesapeake City Civic Association, and it has been restored to its original state as far as possible. The first floor has been furnished and is being used as a town library, having been officially opened on June 26, 1976. A shop is planned for the main floor of the building.

#8 Continued

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1. The National Waterway, Ralph D. Gray, Page 68.
 2. Johnston's History of Cecil County, Published in 1881.
 3. JS 37 - 366 Cecil County Land Records.

Chesapeake City
Cecil County
Scale: 15 rods to an inch
An Illustrated Atlas of
Cecil County, Maryland
Lake, Griffing and Stevenson
Philadelphia, 1877

SOUTH CHESAPEAKE
CITY HISTORIC DISTRICT
CECIL CO.
ELKTON QUAD.





FRANKLIN HALL
SOUTH CHESAPEAKE CITY, MD.
NORTHWEST ELEVATION

CA-120

2 col { WHIB
\$
DEMO



Franklin Hall - CE-120

west facade

Michael Bourne. April 1976



CE-120

Franklin Hall
S. Ches. City

PJB 2/18/95